

A Person Is According To His Heart And Tongue

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By Shaykh Saleem Ibn 'Eed Al-Hilaalee

This is a poem that is one of the best of the poems that I have seen quoting the manners of learning and the manners of acquiring knowledge. I saw that I should quote it here due to its beauty and due to the benefits I hoped would come about through it for the one who reads my book and hoping that Allaah would benefit myself and him through it:

"Know that knowledge comes about through learning, through memorisation, precision and understanding. Knowledge may be granted to a young person and an old person may be prevented from it.

For indeed a person is according to two small parts of the body (i.e., his heart and his tongue) and not according to his legs and his arms - rather his tongue, and his heart that is built into his chest. That is an amazing part of creation. So knowledge comes about through understanding and revising and lessons, and through reflecting and through discussing.

So it may be the case that a person attains great memorisation and he can quote the text and repeat the wording but in anything else he has no share of that which the well versed scholar comprehends.

It may be the case that a person has great eagerness and love for knowledge, and for memorisation, but his heart is dull-witted and he is unable to memorise and narrate. He has no way to quote that which is narrated, whereas another person is granted without effort memorisation of that which occurs in the chain of narration. It agitates his heart without troubling his eyes and he has no need of stores of books. So seek the knowledge and seek it in a good manner and knowledge will not come about except through manners.

The beneficial manners are fine behaviour, and in too much speech there is hatred. So for as long as you live try to attain good manners, you will be praiseworthy for as long as you remain. And if a question appears amongst the people, something well-known from knowledge or something newly raised up, then don't be the first person to give an answer to it, until you have seen that somebody before you has spoken about that.

Because how many examples there have been before us of people in haste who speak without understanding and who speak erroneously, and this has earned them ridicule in the gatherings with the people of understanding and those who strive. Silence is truly a better adornment for you if you do not have certain knowledge. And if you are uncertain about a matter about which you are asked, then say, 'For that which you ask about I do not have any narration.' So this is half of knowledge with the scholars, the wise people have not ceased saying this.

And beware of being pleased and amazed with the excellence of your own opinion. And beware of giving an answer to something which will be a mistake. How many answers have been followed by regret, so seek the benefit of silence and being safe, for knowledge is an ocean, the limit of it is very far away, it has no end point that you can seek to reach and you have not gathered all of the knowledge, certainly not, not even a tenth of it even if you collected all that you

had. That which remains for you is far more than that which you know, and even the fastest horse sometimes stumbles.

And if you hear something that you do not understand then ask for its meaning. The saying is two sayings, a saying which you will understand, and a saying which you will not understand. Every saying will have an answer covering that which is false and that which is true. For speech there is a beginning and an end so understand the both of them and let your mind be attentive.

Do not hasten to speak and do not hasten to return it until it leads you to that which follows on from it. It may be the case that the people of virtue are rendered unable to give an answer to questions they are asked, and therefore withhold with silence from answering when doubt comes to them regarding the answer. And even if a saying is counted by the common people to be like pure silver, then silence is from the purest gold.

So understand this, may Allaah guide you to the manners of seeking knowledge."